

School system

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face the more common issue of uncontrollable increases in special education, and special education transportation.)

As we begin to prepare the school budget for the 2005-06 school year, we know that we will have approximately 140 more students. We also know that significant relief will not likely come from either the state or the town. We are now preparing, for the second time in two years, to reduce staff, increase class size, add more fees, and generally diminish the quality of the school district's program. We will also analyze all the positions in the district and think of ways to be still more efficient with the resources that we do have. The school committee and the administration are well aware that "necessity is the mother of invention" and we are spending considerable time and effort looking at the deployment of our resources and staff. We know that the community would expect nothing less from us.

As never before, schools must prepare children for tomorrow. Our children will live and work in a global environment and will need skills in mathematics, science, technology, and foreign language to compete. They will also need to be well-rounded and thoughtful people with backgrounds in the fine and performing arts, and they must be people who are literate in their own language and understand the sweep of history that affects us all.

The federal government and the No Child Left Behind act require schools to improve each year – not just stay the same. The worry of your school superintendent is that we are on the wrong track – one that will give Shrewsbury precisely the schools that it does not want.

Interpreters needed

The Shrewsbury Public Schools is seeking English interpreters to help parents and students communicate with teachers and school staff. Flexible hours -as needed. Confidentiality and interpersonal skills are a must. The following languages are needed:

Portuguese, Mandarin, Russian, Japanese, Vietnamese, Asian Indian languages. Please send letter of application and current resume. Please include compensation requirements (hourly rate for attending meetings for purpose of translating and per page rate for translating written documents). Submit to: Thomas Kennedy, Director of Human Resources, Shrewsbury Public Schools, 100 Maple Ave. Shrewsbury, MA 01545.

Shrewsbury School

Journal

Communications Committee

The non-profit *Shrewsbury School Journal* is published three times a year and reaches every household in the diverse and growing town of Shrewsbury. It is published by the central office of the Shrewsbury Public Schools with the help and expertise of many individuals. The mission of the *Shrewsbury School Journal* is to provide an accurate source of information about our school system and the town in which we live. We hope to foster a community of continuous learners.

Anthony J. Bent

Superintendent

Judith Evans

Assistant Superintendent

Dawna Alphonse

Project Coordinator

Reminder

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substantial. Additionally, the United States does value the individual and our system of education reflects that belief. There is, however, an allegiance to community in Japan that is a reminder to us all. In John Kennedy's inaugural speech nearly forty-five years ago, he said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." Sadly, that notion seems antique as we begin 2006.

It remains revolutionary (and correct) that the American system places such value on individual freedom, and schools work hard to reach and develop each student. At the same time, our society might benefit if there were a greater sense of community in our cities and towns, and in our country. From the perspective of an educator, it really does take a village to raise a child.

PHOTOS BY DR. ANTHONY BENT



Above, students at Higashi High School in Toyota City. Cleaning the school and school grounds is one of the responsibilities of students. Below, students at Wakazono Junior High School prepare their classroom for lunch. Left, children at Dojiyama Elementary School arrive each morning in pre-arranged groups.



Raising the bar in mathematics

MARGERY CLARK
COOLIDGE PRINCIPAL
GARY CHALMERS
CURRICULUM SPECIALIST

This year, the Shrewsbury Public Schools adopted the Everyday Mathematics Program in grades K – 6. Everyday Math is a rigorous curriculum that is used across the United States by more than two million students. This program has been extensively researched and proven to build student's mathematical knowledge from the basics to higher-order thinking and critical problem solving.

Everyday Math is built on the principle that mathematics means more to children when it is rooted in real-life problems and situations. Another principle is that children's mathematical knowledge should grow from their experiences.

Everyday Math recognizes that children rarely learn a new concept or skill the first time they experience it. Children begin to understand concepts and skills after repeated exposures. Knowing this, topics are taught progressively throughout the grade levels in the Everyday Math Program.

Everyday Math has high expectations for students, allowing them to explore math concepts that aren't usually taught at their particular grade level. Children learn probability, geometry, patterns, algebra, and data gathering and analysis. Math is integrated into other subject areas and ongoing classroom routines. Some examples of this enriched curriculum are: sharing ideas through discussion, solving problems that relate to everyday situations, developing concept readiness through hands-on activities and explorations and increasing "fact power"

through games.

Professional development for the Everyday Math Program for all math teachers in grades K – 6 has been on going throughout the current school year. In addition, two Shrewsbury educators have participated in mathematics facilitator training through EDC (Education Development Center), funded through grants from Intel Corporation. Stephanie Roszko, grade 5 teacher, and Margery Clark, Coolidge School principal, attended different two-week in-residency training and have co-

Everyday Math is built on the principle that mathematics means more to children when it is rooted in real-life problems and situations.

facilitated courses with facilitators from other school districts, starting in 2004. As a result, high-quality professional development opportunities, focusing on math, have been offered to Shrewsbury teachers and administrators.

Developing Mathematical Ideas (DMI) is a professional development curriculum designed to help teachers think through the major ideas of K-7 mathematics and examine how children develop those ideas. At the core of the materials are sets of classroom cases illustrating student thinking, as described by their teachers. In addition to case discussions, the curriculum offers teachers opportunities: to explore mathematics in lessons led by facilitators; to share and discuss the work of

their own students; to view and discuss videotapes of mathematics classrooms; to write their own classroom cases; to analyze lessons taken from innovative elementary mathematics curricula; and to read overviews of related research.

To date, two sections of DMI have been offered to Shrewsbury teachers, Number and Operations, Part 1: Building a System of Tens and Number and Operations, Part 2: Making Meaning of Operations. In Part 1, participants explore the base-ten structure of the number system and consider how that structure is exploited in multi-digit computational procedures. In Part 2, participants examine the actions and situations modeled by the four basic operations.

Additionally, two modules from Lenses on Learning, a professional development curriculum designed for supervisors of mathematics instruction, have been offered to administrators from the Central Math Collaborative, which includes Shrewsbury.

Module 1: Instructional Leadership in Mathematics presents new understandings about the nature of mathematics learning and teaching that underlie standards-based instruction. Fundamental issues of math instruction and implications for school leadership are explored, through a variety of readings and classroom videotapes.

Module 3: Observing Today's Mathematics Classroom focuses on observing instruction in standards-based mathematics classrooms. Participants focus on conducting classroom observations and improving meetings with teachers about those observations. These modules are open to all administrators from districts in the Central Math Collaborative and have been funded in full through generous grants from the Intel Corporation.